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# *Corruption Practices Among Young Elective Public Officials (Sanggunian Kabataan) In Iligan City, Southern Philippines*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to explore the involvement in graft and corruption among elective barangay youth officials in a city in Southern Philippines. Using a qualitative research design employing a case study method, 10 informants were included in this study and were selected using snowball sampling technique. The findings indicated that the informants were aware of the forms of graft and corrupt practices stipulated in the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act in the Philippines (RA 3019) and other legal documents. However, despite this, most of them admitted to have been involved in any of the following irregular acts while in public service: malversation of public funds, evasion of public bidding in the purchase of supplies and equipments, forgery, bribery, making ghost projects and payrolls, abuse of powers, among others. It was known also that corruption was caused mainly by bureaucratic dysfunctions especially in the delay of budget releases and political socialization with older and corrupt barangay officials who passed on the techniques of corruption to the young leader informants. The policy implications of the study demands further strengthening of governmental structures and processes that would ensure observance of good governance among public officials both at the barangay (local) and national levels.

**KEYWORDS:** barangay, bureaucratic dysfunction, graft and corruption, political socialization, Sangguniang Kabataan

## **INTRODUCTION**

The problem of corruption has been one of the major areas of inquiry among many scholars for a long time now because of its broad impact to the political and economic situations of a country. Corruption is commonly defined as the misuse and abuse of public office for private gain (UNDP, 1997). According to Nye (1976), this act involves a complex range of practices which encompasses behavior which deviates from the formal duties of public role. However, De Guzman et al., (1979) assert that the parties involved in corruption may be internal or external to the bureaucratic organization.

Corruption is considered pervasive and a universal problem afflicting developed and developing countries alike (Shleifer and Vishny, 1993; Pedro Jr., 2001). In fact, Shleifer and Vishny (1993) argued that the structures and political processes of weak governments result in high corruption levels especially in the developing countries. Corruption is considered today as anti-development, being the primary obstacle to social and economic growth in poor countries (UNDP, 1997; Andvig et al., (2000) despite its functional side. Mauro (1993), for instance, found out that countries with higher levels of corruption have lower ratio of both total and private investments to GDP. The complex nature of this phenomenon necessitates the determination of its context, nature, characteristics, patterns and organizational structure in effectively addressing the problem.

In the Philippines, corruption is rampant. The Transparency International 2010 report says that the level of corruption in the Philippines has worsened in the last three years, with the country being perceived as 12<sup>th</sup> most corrupt in a field of 178 nations (<http://cpi.transparency.org>).

According to Amorado (2007), the corrupt bureaucratic structure of the national government has penetrated the local government unit (even at the barangay level which is the base and smallest political unit of the country) upon the implementation of the 1991 Local Government Code of the Philippines (Republic Act 7160). Under this law, the barangay local government unit (BLGU) was then able to receive its annual internal revenue allotment (IRA) from the national government. The devolution of power to the LGU was believed to produce empowerment of the political base of the country.

The youth through the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) has been highly encouraged to participate in politics and governance starting at the barangay level and gets 10 % of the barangay IRA. The SK council comprising of 1 chair and 7 members are elected by the youth voting population 15 to 17 years old. The council appoints among its members a secretary, treasurer and committee heads. The Philippine government is the only nation in the world which has a mechanism of involving the youth sector in governance (UNDP, 2007). This is in response to the call of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Children to create an avenue wherein they can actively represent their sector in the affairs of the local government and in the country as a whole.

The need to examine the experiences of these elected youth leaders especially their involvement/

non-involvement in graft and corruption deserves scholarly attention since this is an unexplored area of study based on literature of corruption in the Philippines reviewed by the authors (Madlangbayan, 2008; Aban, 2009; Laut et al., 2012, Javier, 1998). The participation of the youth in local governance is a good starting point to examine whether these youth leaders have imbibed the ideals of clean government or, just like the involvement of traditional political leaders in corruption; they too are following the same path.

This study intends to examine whether the youth leaders in Iligan City are involved in graft and corruption practices at the barangay level. Specifically, this study aims to obtain information on the following: roles of the SK in local governance, budgetary allocations, notions of graft and corruption, nature/type of graft and corruption practices experienced, their reasons for involvement/ non-involvement in corruption practices, the people involved, extent of corruption undertaken, and their perception as to how this practice affects them at the personal level and the SK organization level/youth governance.

In this study, there are two approaches used in understanding corruption. The first one is to view this practice at the agent-actor level being the one who defines his experiences from his own perspective. In this approach, Homan's exchange theory and Bandura's social learning theory are used as tools for understanding corruption practices. Exchange theory conceptualizes social interaction as an exchange of tangible or intangible goods and services, ranging from food and shelter to social approval or sympathy. People choose to participate in an exchange after they have examined the costs and the rewards of alternative courses of action

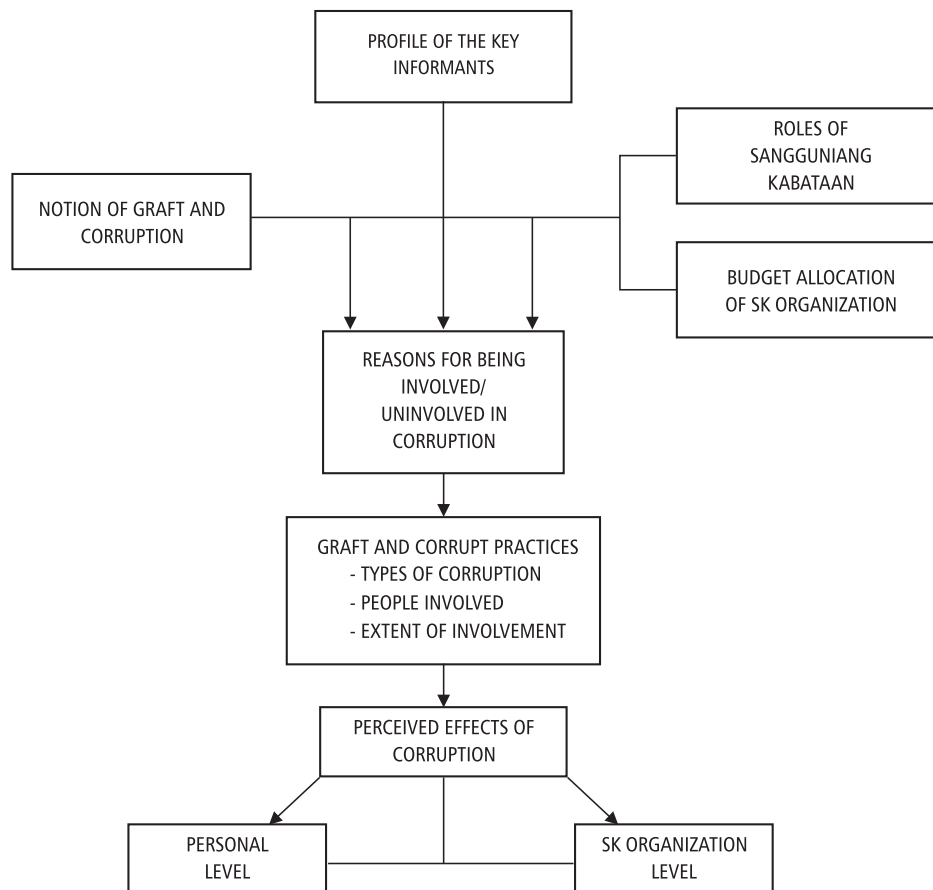
and have chosen the most attractive choice (Ritzer, 2000). The more satisfied they are with the outcomes of exchange, the more likely they are to repeat their participation. Involvement of the SK members in corruption is assumed to be the result of repeated actions in the past or deprivations that direct them to do the act in anticipation of a goal which could be money, property and other desired ends. On the other hand, how is corruption learned? It is through the assumptions laid down by Bandura that can supply the possible answer. According to him, "Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (Bandura, 1969).

The second approach is to look at corruption at the organizational level. In this approach, corruption could be seen as a dysfunction of an ideal bureaucratic structure governed by rational leaders that are guided by the values of logic, efficiency and reason. Corruption is argued to be the antithesis of the bureaucratic objective towards attaining efficiency, calculability, and predictability in decision making. Bureaucratic laws, rules and regulations derived their legitimacy from the consistent, disciplined, rationalized and methodical calculation of optimum means to given ends (Weber, 1947). On the other hand, corruption may operate in a different manner as it is usually governed by collusion and secrecy that is, hidden from public view. However, the objective conditions set by the organization or society may be very stringent that people are unable to obtain their goals using institutional means. Using Merton's anomie theory, the anomic person may become an innova-

tor in his conscious desire to obtain an end which he could not fulfill through legitimate means. Thus in a bureaucratic set up, this person may resort to illegal means, hence corruption, because opportunities offered to him in the organization to obtain a goal is thwarted or limited by bureaucratic regulations (Merton, 1957).

The schematic diagram below shows that the SK as an organization has defined roles and budgetary allocations in the barangay which could serve as the starting point to analyze the structural conduciveness of the SK to corruption. At the personal level, the SK informants have notions about the forms of graft and corruption that exist not only in the local/ barangay level but also in the government bureaucracy. Similarly, their personal profile (age and SK position) might have relevance in their participation in corruption being young or not receiving monetary incentive relative to their position. These organizational and personal conditions are assumed to contribute certain weights on the reasons of their involvement/non-involvement in graft and corruption viewed in the following dimensions: form of corruption undertaken, people involved in the act and extent of involvement in terms of the monetary rewards obtained. Their perception of the effects of their involvement in corruption personally (like values and motivation) and organizationally (role performance and budgetary aspects, etc.) define the meanings they constructed based on their experience in public service. This is helpful in understanding how corruption might end, being passed on or fermented in the minds of these young leaders who could possibly be the future leaders of the country.

FIGURE 1. SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE STUDY



## RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative approach employing a case study method. Primary information was derived from 10 key informants comprising of 5 SK chairs and 5 SK councilors who served office from 2007-2010 and were selected through snowball sampling method. They were also mostly college students, single, 20 years old and served 3 years (full term) in their position. Out of the 44 barangays in Iligan City, 10 were included out of which 6 are urban and 4 are rural barangays represented each by these 10 key informants. The identity of the barangays and informants were secured through assigning them with fictitious

names to abide with the ethical principles in conducting research. Informed consent was also secured prior to the interview proper. Content analysis was the method used in organizing and classifying data and thematic approach was also employed in the data analysis.

Table 1 below shows the profile of the barangays in the study showing their income (IRA), population, land size and SK allocation which is 10 % share of the IRA of mother barangay. IRA is determined according to population size and land area of the local government unit, in this case, the barangay. As shown in the table, the top 4 barangays with the highest IRA are urban and

(with the exception of Barangay GO and HD which are urban) the rest are rural.

## DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

### 1. BUDGET ALLOCATION AND ROLES OF THE SK OFFICERS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Before discussing the roles of SK, it is significant to present its budget allocation and distribution as basis for us to understand the source of corruption in the organization. Aside from the 10 % IRA received by the SK from the general fund of the barangay (Sec.329, 2001 SK By-laws), it can also hold fund-raising activities (Sec. 426c) or solicit contributions (Sec. 433b). The breakdown of the SK budget is as follows: Green Brigade program ( 10%), Capability building program ( 10%), Anti-drug abuse campaign program( 10 %), 58% for the Development programs such as education, health, disaster and calamity management, sports, infrastructure and legislative work, and 2% for the

Annual dues for the SK National Federation program (Source: 2001 SK Constitution and By-laws ).

SK is mandated by its Constitution and By-laws to initiate programs designed to enhance the social, political, economic, cultural, moral, spiritual, and physical development of the members. However, upon examination of the research data, it was noted that there is often a disparity between the youth's most pressing needs and interests, such as livelihood and education, and the SK's projects which tend to focus more on sports, culture, and the environment. SK should also promulgate resolutions necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth in the barangay but the responses indicated that the SK's performance in the legislative function was generally weak. However, it is interesting to note that Clean Brigade program, education program in the form of *Lakbay Aral* (educational exposure of SK) and sports activities become the major sources of corruption in the SK.

TABLE I. PROFILE OF THE BARANGAYS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

BARANGAY	INCOME (IRA) 2007	POPULATION 2007	LAND AREA (Has)	SK ALLOCATION, 2007
AJ	8,952,570.00	28,794	320.6707	895,257.000
BG	7,128,987.55	12,041	1,078.2870	712,898.755
CE	6,184,040.29	10,882	675.1940	618,404.029
DM	5,217,138.78	16,974	338.4339	521,713.878
EL	4,281,084.06	13,906	48.1768	428,108.406
FC	4,200,857.26	9,140	264.3808	420,085.726
GO	2,669,402.76	6,967	33.2512	266,940.276
HD	2,656,609.95	12,119	745.3201	265,660.995
IA	1,407,172.33	6,158	190.9275	140,717.233
JB	1,360,727.14	10,220	255.0363	136,072.714

Source: Department of Interior and Local Government, Iligan City, 2007

## 2. NOTIONS ABOUT GRAFT AND CORRUPTION

Awareness about graft and corruption practices is prevalent among the informants. In fact, they believed that corruption is part of an organization/system making it an inevitable and normal daily operation. They argued that even the well-meaning political leaders cannot avoid corruption. Graft and corruption practices can be in the form of overpricing the cost of office supplies, kickbacks, forging signatures, false transparency, abuse of power, stealing public money, bribery, malversation of funds, ghost projects, getting late in a meeting, among others. Corruption is bad, but it is needed for the survival of a political career (like stealing government money to buy votes) or getting away from bureaucratic red tape and inefficiency.

The Philippine government bureaucracy is ridden with corruption that pervades in all levels, that is from the national to the local government up to the smallest political unit which is the barangay. They considered this practice as unfair because only the politicians enjoy the government resources while the majority of the Filipinos are wallowing in poverty. However, corruption cannot be avoided but can be minimized through laws.

## 3. REASONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN GRAFT AND CORRUPTION PRACTICES

Except for one SK councilor who was strong-willed and had spared himself from committing the act, nine of the key informants said that they were involved in graft and corruption during their terms. Corruption was resorted to by these young public officials because of the benefits it offered to them; making money or saving them from an unfavorable situation (especially budget deficits during travels). The personal motivation to engage

in corruption occurred among them especially if they get monetary incentive for their involvement or if they want to retrieve the personal money they had taken from their pocket especially on the part of the SK chair who shared his honoraria with the SK councilors. Since it is only the SK chair who receives a monthly honorarium equivalent to the honorarium given to barangay councilors, the SK councilors also feel that they all deserve an incentive from the SK funds. This is the reason why they find any possible means to get money and compensate for their efforts/labor during their term through conducting irregular activities that will surely yield monetary returns.

Organizationally, corruption happens because of delayed budgetary release of a forthcoming project, as source of honorarium for the SK councilors, purchase of much needed materials needing immediate funding or to facilitate the release of urgent papers, among others. In particular, the illegal nature of the act involves secrecy on the part of the participants since it could become a reason for blackmailing the involved parties in the future once the SK official refused to enlist his involvement in the illegal activity. The Clean Brigade fund is the usual funding source for the honorarium of the SK councilors the amount of which varies by barangay. In here, there is interplay of both personal motives and organizational loopholes that find its way to corruption. The moral judgment of the informants is generally weak because they were young then. All these would have implications to the kind of moral recovery and educational programs to be directed at the institutional levels which should start at the family. On the other hand, modifying legal provisions in the operation of the SK organization may address

the organizational conduciveness of the SK to corruption.

#### 4. TYPE OF CORRUPTION UNDERTAKEN

The following discussions involve a categorization of the corruption practices done by the informants while in office. The classification may overlap but the common denominators of all of them are dishonesty/fraud, abuse of power, absence of transparency and integrity.

##### **a. Embezzlement/Diversion of Funds**

Some amount of the budget in the SK allocated for a particular purpose is diverted to other uses. This comes in the form of purchasing laptop for the money originally allotted for books, using budget for the SK council tour for the tour of the SK chair's family, or using money intended for the payment of Clean Brigade cleaners to offset the deficit in the conduct of cultural activities. These practices are commonly identified in the local and national studies on corruption that had been done so far (Madlangbayan, 2008; Aban, 2009; Laut et al., 2012, Javier, 1998).

##### **b. Payroll Padding/Ghost Employment**

In order to obtain honorarium for the SK councilors which is not provided by law of any monetary benefit while in office, the money is taken from the 10% Clean Brigade fund. This is done by preparing a proposal for the conduct of an environmental cleanup activity where the budget for the workers is stipulated. This proposal is going to be endorsed by the SK council (with their signatures) to be submitted for approval of the mother barangay. In some barangays, the SK members will personally do the cleaning and had to prepare their daily time record (DTR) for their

services in order to be paid. In others, they simply hire people to do the labor but they include their names in the list of workers without having to personally engage themselves in the activity. The SK members involved will collect their salary together with the salary of the ghost workers they listed in the payroll. The amount involved ranged from Php 1,000.00 to Php 4,000.00 monthly.

In the law, it was not permitted that the SK chair will receive a double compensation. What one SK chair did was to list his younger brother's name in the payroll but he was the one who collected the amount. If we look at the at embezzlement and payroll padding as forms of corruption practices, the anti-corruption laws in the Philippines especially Section 3, paragraph (b) of RA 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) and Article 217 of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines strictly prohibited the conduct of these acts among public officials.

Looking at the situation from the theoretical stance of Merton, these practices are the result of the failure of the bureaucracy to provide the SK a constitutional provision that allows the SK council to obtain monetary benefit for their involvement and participation in youth governance. Because of this, they look for manipulative ways to get what they want through payroll padding and related means.

##### **c. Fraud During Travel/Tours And abuse of Power**

Falsification of public documents occurred during travels/tours of SK officers. In order to save on the travel cost and offset travel budget deficit, over declaration of expenses was commonly observed in the liquidation of expenses for transpor-

tation and foods, and other items stipulated in the itinerary. In certain occasion, the SK chair pocketed the travel budget of the SK councilors who joined a tour which is a clear case of abuse of power.

There were situations in the conduct of cultural activities wherein the SK members played corruption by charging entrance fees but the proceeds were not liquidated but, instead, were divided among themselves.

**d. Fraud in the Award of Contract: Overpricing, Absence of Public Bidding and Kickbacks**

Corruption is costly to the government resources if mismanaged. The law provides that a public bidding shall be conducted in purchasing government supplies and equipment in order to pick up the lowest bidder. This is the juiciest form of corruption since the corrupt official simply looks for a supplier of a good to be purchased and awards the contract without bidding in anticipation of at least 10 % commission from the supplier. A piecemeal purchasing strategy whereby small quantities of supplies are bought in continuous process is resorted to by the canvasser in order to do away with the bidding process. Because it took some times for the payment to be given especially if the budget is delayed, the supplier usually charged an overpriced cost of the items in order to cover up for the commission of the canvasser. However, there was also a case when overpricing of items was done in order to get money to pay for the services of the sports referee whose honorarium was missed in the budget.

The process described above, violates the requirement in Open Public Bidding in the Awarding of Contract (Sec 3, RA 3019). It is also a moral,

social and cultural problem in a society that perpetuates personal dealings through the practice of reciprocity, debt of gratitude and patronage. In the language of Amorado (2007), he called these cultural breeders of corruption especially with the tendency of the Filipinos to utilize connections to facilitate “fixed” transactions.

R.A. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees) has more comprehensive provisions on conflict of interest. The law and its implementing rules say that public officials cannot have a direct or indirect financial or material interest in any transaction requiring the approval of their office. An official is said to have a financial or material interest if s/he is a substantial stockholder, member of the board, or officer of a corporation (Coronel and Tirol, 2002).

**e. Prize Manipulation and Forging Signatures**

Prize manipulation usually happened when budget proposal for the SK cultural/sports event is not approved. This is done by not giving the exact amount of prizes to the winners so that the extra money then could be used in other events, or they can pocket it. In the voucher, a higher amount is indicated but in the awarding of prizes, the winners will receive only lower amount. What will be passed to the treasurer for liquidation report will be a forged voucher in order to hide the anomaly.

In another case, the fund for the Clean Brigade was released involving an amount of Php16, 000.00 without the knowledge of the SK council. This amount was intended for an activity which the mother barangay never permitted the SK to undertake. So the SK chair forged the signatures of the SK members in the payroll so that he can get the money.



The above cases are in violation of Section 3, paragraph (b) of R.A 3019. Also, these practices are considered criminal acts as defined by article 171, Section IV of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines. In fact, some barangay officials in Iligan City are already sued for violating these provisions based on the reports of the informants.

#### **f. Corruption in the Use of Government Properties**

There seems to be a failure among the young public officials to distinguish what is a private and a public property. According to Rose-Ackerman (1978), corruption is an interface of the public and private sectors or in the language of Heidenheimer et al. (1989), the transaction between these sectors makes the actors illegitimately convert public goods, which are collectively owned, into private goods. As gathered, majority of the SK council members looked at public properties purchased during their terms as their own. For example, most of them used personally the laptop of the office, motorbike, cellular phone, sports equipment, school supplies, computer set, among others. In fact, a few admitted to have subdivided among themselves and brought home parts of a computer set to include a monitor, CPU and printer. There is failure on their part to consider public accountability in governance especially in the use of public properties for official purposes. The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines and the previously stipulated laws (RA 3019 and RA 6713) cited provisions for defining acts of public officials which are punishable under these laws.

#### **g. Bribery**

Bribery could occur in three levels. The first

level is for the SK chair to bribe the SK councilors so they would approve his/her project proposal. The next level is for the SK chair, with or without the participation of the SK councilors, to bribe the barangay officials (the barangay chair, treasurer or head of the finance committee) for their approval of an SK project proposal. However, in order that the liquidation of the money released would not be problematic, the next level is for the SK chair/council to bribe the personnel or auditor of the Commission of Audit (COA) for a smooth sailing approval of the liquidation report. The COA being the financial watchdog of the local government unit (LGU) is strict about how the finances are allocated and spent. Once the COA questions the liquidation report, future budget releases of the LGU, including the SK, would be suspended. For instance, in the previous example cited on the “secret” release of P16, 000.00, the SK chair bribed the barangay treasurer and chair of the barangay finance committee for their approval. He was also able to seek approval from COA that some funds under the Clean Brigade program will be converted as SK councilors’ honorarium. In most cases, if there were projects that needed to be rushed, some amount shall be given to the Commission on Audit (COA) auditor and workers in order to facilitate the transaction. Sometimes, aside from the ‘grease money’ given, material things like cakes during birthdays, roast pig (lechon) are demanded in exchange for the approval of the transaction.

Bureaucratic corruption involves outright robbery of the treasury (kleptocracy). This situation is aptly captured by Mushtaq Khan who looks at corruption as “*behavior that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a*

*position of public authority because of private motives such as wealth, power, or status”* (Khan 1996:12). In the Philippine case, an ordinary citizen cannot grossly rely on the transparency and accountability of public officials because even the watchdogs of the financial resources of the government like the COA personnel are parties in corruption. The network of support established by the youth leaders, which could be considered as their social capital, becomes the breeders of corruption. The bribed party allowed illegal activities of the SK officials in order for them to obtain personal gain from the anomalous transaction. When viewed at a macro perspective, Hope (2000) argues that widespread corruption is a symptom of a poorly functioning state, failure of ethical leadership, democracy and good governance. However, it has to be stressed that the Philippines is not bereft of laws that protect the resources of the government and to fight against corruption. The only problem is the aggressive implementation of these laws by imposing grave penalties on violators caught.

## 5. PEOPLE INVOLVED CORRUPTION AND THEIR PARTICIPATION

As cited earlier, those involved in corruption are public officials in the barangay who are involved in the monetary transactions of the SK as approving officers like the SK council, barangay treasurer, barangay chair and head of the barangay finance committee. These are the horizontal connections or the local corruption network. Private individuals are also involved like the supplier of goods for public use. On the other hand, the COA is considered as an inter-agency corruption partner responsible for the audit of the liquidation report of the SK official.

## 6. EXTENT OF MONETARY INVOLVEMENT

This study was able to document that an SK official got at least Php 500.00 to Php 144, 000.00 after serving 3 years in the office. The SK chairs have higher monetary involvement than the SK councilors because the latter have limited access to the financial resources of the barangay. Other SK councilors got Php 1,000.00 to Php 4,000.00 monthly the amount of which was taken usually from the Clean Brigade fund. On the other hand, the SK chair got Php 25,000.00 to more than P100, 000.00 aside from his honorarium from the mother barangay. This would indeed indicate that huge amount of money is really lost to corruption which the Transparency International (2010) estimated to be 20% of the Philippines' annual budget. If translated to monetary terms, this is equivalent to Php 250 billion a year (<http://www.transparencyreporting.net>).

## 7. THE BREEDERS OF CORRUPTION

Transmitters of the culture of corruption were identified in the study. These persons could be fellow SK or barangay officials, notably the barangay treasurer, or COA personnel. They taught the informants the mode of operation in doing corruption. The techniques involved in doing the act include getting the right connections and false transparency because it is mandatory that all the paper transactions done in support of money embezzled shall appear legitimate. Also, the informants claimed that they were taught, helped, and protected by the above-mentioned corruption partners.

Corruption is also learned by the informants themselves when they faced some problems to

finance their activities or tempted not to report the money they collected from income-generating activities like solicitations and entrance fees for sports and cultural activities. They reported that corruption is a matter of a change of attitude- from being guilty at first to being comfortable with it every time you do it. Furthermore, learning corruption from a parent who is a barangay official also surfaced. The corruption networks cited above are indeed startling facts as these would mean dismantling the complex avenues for corruption which cut across institutional spheres, including the family.

#### 8. PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION IN GOVERNANCE

At the personal level, corruption is seen by the informants both in the positive and negative angles. The immediate personal monetary gain plus their realization that corruption is part of the system make them lenient about the practice. The others admitted that they were then young, vulnerable and lacked wisdom that is why they committed the act. On the other hand, some believed that in whatever form and reason, morally, corruption is bad—and politics is the dirtiest game to play. In fact, the people who said this would not engage in politics anymore having seen how corruption had plagued politics.

At the organizational level, corruption saves the SK a few times especially when faced with budget deficits, delayed budgetary releases, or obtain budget for the SKs honorarium. The bureaucratic delays and legal restrictions forced the SK officers to find for viable but illegitimate means to operate under limited resources and difficult circumstances. The integrity and accountability of the young

public officials are adversely affected because of the organizational loopholes and structures that promote the practice of graft and corruption in the barangay local government unit.

#### CONCLUSION

Corruption has many facets, causes, reasons and functions in various contexts. Worldwide corruption is seen by Hope (2000) as symptom of poorly functioning state, failure of ethical leadership, democracy and good governance. Among the young public officials in the study, their involvement in corruption is just a reflection of a bigger national corruption problem of the Philippine government which could be the result of moral decay, misuse of public power, and weak governance. Sad to say, these youth leaders are not spared from this problem as they are a microcosm of the national situation. Young leaders as they are, they are now following the tracks of corruption laid by the older political officials in the barangay. Their public consciousness and idealism which are the basic ingredients in sparking the zest for political change, responsible leadership and moral transformation are now at stake.

The theoretical assumptions posed in line with Homan's exchange theory, has found some support in the data. For instance, the estimation of rewards (financial gain) outweighs the costs (like guilt) in participating into the corruption practices. Also, those involved in the act of corruption are considered innovators (using Merton's typology) who wanted to obtain a goal (like money, public goods) by not following the institutional means.

The ideals of bureaucracy as advanced by Weber are challenged by corruption. In this study, corruption even facilitated efficiency and prompt service

that derails/dismantles bureaucratic red tape. Corruption also circumvents the law in favor of the corrupt actors since the rigidity and legality in the operations of the bureaucracy is hard to penetrate.

However, despite the upside of corruption to the bureaucratic operations, its downside is devastating at the macro level. Corruption is costly on the part of the government. The money lost to corruption could have been used for productive projects that benefit the poor. The overlap of private and public sectors result in plunder of public goods. Corruption that involves the government's internal control, audit, and financial watchdogs result in financial drain of the limited budget of the local government units, including the SK.

This study has implications to strengthening the campaign against corruption thereby promoting good governance as subsumed in the platforms of the Aquino administration. Democratic participation of the people, civil society organizations, non-government organizations, and media, among others could facilitate exposures of corruption among government leaders as bold moves to curb the act. Amendment in the SK constitution and by-laws to address issues on transparency and accountability, leadership morals and ethics are of primary importance in order to teach these young leaders the value of responsible and clean government.

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